

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 24, 2014

The Honorable Tom Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

1131

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As Members of the Senate who represent rural states, we write to emphasize the importance of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) final rules for Phase II of the Mobility Fund (MF II). It is critically important to our rural constituents that MF II will ensure they have the same access to advanced wireless services as their urban counterparts.

In 2011, the FCC undertook a monumental transition of the Universal Service program. We applaud the Commission for this effort. However, because MF II represents the final phase of universal service reform to support advanced mobile services for years to come, it is important the FCC heed the advice of local communities and stakeholders. The FCC's rules for MF II must fulfill the Commission's mandate to provide advanced telecommunications services in all regions of the country, and ensure rural areas have services comparable to urban areas.

The FCC's June 10<sup>th</sup> Order and further notice of proposed rulemaking contemplates a number of changes – the details of which will likely determine the success of MF II. The health of the rural economy rests, in large part, on advanced mobile infrastructure that can provide high speed data and voice coverage in homes, towns, and on our rural roads. Ubiquitous, advanced mobile services remain a challenge, and considerable gaps persist in many rural areas. The rules for MF II and the resources made available for this program must meet this challenge so that rural families and businesses can benefit from the wireless revolution in agriculture and education, as well as in healthcare and emergency response.

Rural households and businesses stand to benefit from MF II if it is implemented correctly. We strongly urge the Commission to reconcile its rules for MF II with the practical challenges of building and maintaining advanced wireless services in rural areas in a competitively neutral manner. It is imperative to close the wireless divide between rural and urban America, and the FCC must seize MF II as an opportunity to do so.



Roy Blunt  
United States Senator

Sincerely,



Roger Wicker  
United States Senator

Jerry Moran

Jerry Moran  
United States Senator

Kelly A. Ayotte

Kelly Ayotte  
United States Senator

Deb Fischer

Deb Fischer  
United States Senator



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2014

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
United States Senate  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in how best to update our Universal Service Fund (USF) policies to reflect current consumer mobility demand and need, especially in rural and high-cost areas. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have similar opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. In the 2011 USF/ICC Transformation Order, the Commission took significant strides to update the universal service program to reflect the realities of the 21st century. In particular, the Commission adopted specific performance goals to preserve and advance the universal availability of voice service and to ensure the universal availability of modern networks capable of providing advanced mobile voice and broadband services.

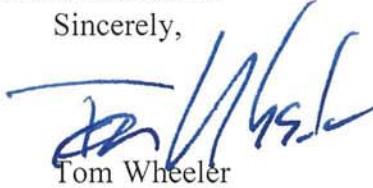
A core component of the Commission's 2011 USF reforms was the creation of the Connect America Fund to preserve and advance voice and robust broadband services, both fixed and mobile, in high-cost areas of the nation that the marketplace would otherwise not serve. The Commission's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau completed the auction for Mobility Fund Phase I on September 27, 2012, with 33 winning bidders eligible to receive a total of up to \$299,998,632 in one-time support to provide 3G or better mobile voice and broadband services, with disbursements beginning in April 2013 and anticipated to continue through 2016 as carriers complete their deployments.

Earlier this year, the Commission adopted a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) to seek comments on proposals to target funds to support mobile services in a Mobility Fund Phase II. In the FNPRM, we reaffirm our commitment to preserving and advancing mobile voice and broadband services in high-cost areas. In light of marketplace developments in the years since we originally adopted the Mobility Fund regime, we seek comment on how to target funding to areas in which service only exists today due to support from the Universal Service Fund. We also seek to extend service to areas that would not otherwise be covered by commercial 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) deployments. Our goal is consistent with yours: how best to use the limited funds available to us to ensure that rural Americans can take advantage of the opportunities presented by a "mobile society."

Page 2—The Honorable Roy Blunt

I look forward to working with you as we continue reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2014

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte  
United States Senate  
144 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Ayotte:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in how best to update our Universal Service Fund (USF) policies to reflect current consumer mobility demand and need, especially in rural and high-cost areas. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have similar opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 2011 *USF/ICC Transformation Order*, the Commission took significant strides to update the universal service program to reflect the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In particular, the Commission adopted specific performance goals to preserve and advance the universal availability of voice service and to ensure the universal availability of modern networks capable of providing advanced mobile voice and broadband services.

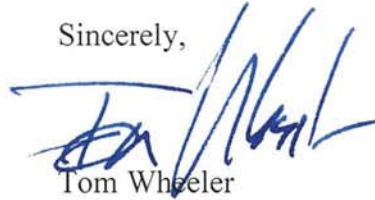
A core component of the Commission's 2011 USF reforms was the creation of the Connect America Fund to preserve and advance voice and robust broadband services, both fixed and mobile, in high-cost areas of the nation that the marketplace would otherwise not serve. The Commission's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau completed the auction for Mobility Fund Phase I on September 27, 2012, with 33 winning bidders eligible to receive a total of up to \$299,998,632 in one-time support to provide 3G or better mobile voice and broadband services, with disbursements beginning in April 2013 and anticipated to continue through 2016 as carriers complete their deployments.

Earlier this year, the Commission adopted a *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (FNPRM) to seek comments on proposals to target funds to support mobile services in a Mobility Fund Phase II. In the FNPRM, we reaffirm our commitment to preserving and advancing mobile voice and broadband services in high-cost areas. In light of marketplace developments in the years since we originally adopted the Mobility Fund regime, we seek comment on how to target funding to areas in which service only exists today due to support from the Universal Service Fund. We also seek to extend service to areas that would not otherwise be covered by commercial 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) deployments. Our goal is consistent with yours: how best to use the limited funds available to us to ensure that rural Americans can take advantage of the opportunities presented by a "mobile society."

Page 2—The Honorable Kelly Ayotte

I look forward to working with you as we continue reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a horizontal line drawn above the first part of the signature.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2014

The Honorable Deb Fischer  
United States Senate  
825 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Fischer:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in how best to update our Universal Service Fund (USF) policies to reflect current consumer mobility demand and need, especially in rural and high-cost areas. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have similar opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. In the 2011 USF/ICC Transformation Order, the Commission took significant strides to update the universal service program to reflect the realities of the 21st century. In particular, the Commission adopted specific performance goals to preserve and advance the universal availability of voice service and to ensure the universal availability of modern networks capable of providing advanced mobile voice and broadband services.

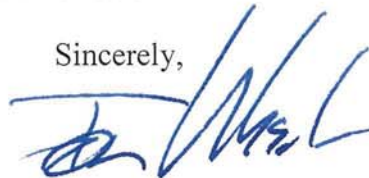
A core component of the Commission's 2011 USF reforms was the creation of the Connect America Fund to preserve and advance voice and robust broadband services, both fixed and mobile, in high-cost areas of the nation that the marketplace would otherwise not serve. The Commission's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau completed the auction for Mobility Fund Phase I on September 27, 2012, with 33 winning bidders eligible to receive a total of up to \$299,998,632 in one-time support to provide 3G or better mobile voice and broadband services, with disbursements beginning in April 2013 and anticipated to continue through 2016 as carriers complete their deployments.

Earlier this year, the Commission adopted a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) to seek comments on proposals to target funds to support mobile services in a Mobility Fund Phase II. In the FNPRM, we reaffirm our commitment to preserving and advancing mobile voice and broadband services in high-cost areas. In light of marketplace developments in the years since we originally adopted the Mobility Fund regime, we seek comment on how to target funding to areas in which service only exists today due to support from the Universal Service Fund. We also seek to extend service to areas that would not otherwise be covered by commercial 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) deployments. Our goal is consistent with yours: how best to use the limited funds available to us to ensure that rural Americans can take advantage of the opportunities presented by a "mobile society."

Page 2—The Honorable Deb Fischer

I look forward to working with you as we continue reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a horizontal line drawn across the middle of the signature.

Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2014

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
United States Senate  
345 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Moran:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in how best to update our Universal Service Fund (USF) policies to reflect current consumer mobility demand and need, especially in rural and high-cost areas. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have similar opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. In the 2011 USF/ICC Transformation Order, the Commission took significant strides to update the universal service program to reflect the realities of the 21st century. In particular, the Commission adopted specific performance goals to preserve and advance the universal availability of voice service and to ensure the universal availability of modern networks capable of providing advanced mobile voice and broadband services.

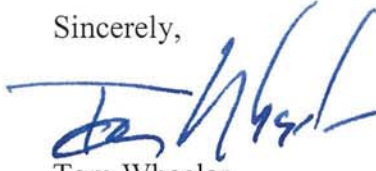
A core component of the Commission's 2011 USF reforms was the creation of the Connect America Fund to preserve and advance voice and robust broadband services, both fixed and mobile, in high-cost areas of the nation that the marketplace would otherwise not serve. The Commission's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau completed the auction for Mobility Fund Phase I on September 27, 2012, with 33 winning bidders eligible to receive a total of up to \$299,998,632 in one-time support to provide 3G or better mobile voice and broadband services, with disbursements beginning in April 2013 and anticipated to continue through 2016 as carriers complete their deployments.

Earlier this year, the Commission adopted a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) to seek comments on proposals to target funds to support mobile services in a Mobility Fund Phase II. In the FNPRM, we reaffirm our commitment to preserving and advancing mobile voice and broadband services in high-cost areas. In light of marketplace developments in the years since we originally adopted the Mobility Fund regime, we seek comment on how to target funding to areas in which service only exists today due to support from the Universal Service Fund. We also seek to extend service to areas that would not otherwise be covered by commercial 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) deployments. Our goal is consistent with yours: how best to use the limited funds available to us to ensure that rural Americans can take advantage of the opportunities presented by a "mobile society."

Page 2—The Honorable Jerry Moran

I look forward to working with you as we continue reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2014

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
United States Senate  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wicker:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in how best to update our Universal Service Fund (USF) policies to reflect current consumer mobility demand and need, especially in rural and high-cost areas. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have similar opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. In the 2011 USF/ICC Transformation Order, the Commission took significant strides to update the universal service program to reflect the realities of the 21st century. In particular, the Commission adopted specific performance goals to preserve and advance the universal availability of voice service and to ensure the universal availability of modern networks capable of providing advanced mobile voice and broadband services.

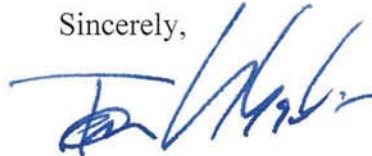
A core component of the Commission's 2011 USF reforms was the creation of the Connect America Fund to preserve and advance voice and robust broadband services, both fixed and mobile, in high-cost areas of the nation that the marketplace would otherwise not serve. The Commission's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau completed the auction for Mobility Fund Phase I on September 27, 2012, with 33 winning bidders eligible to receive a total of up to \$299,998,632 in one-time support to provide 3G or better mobile voice and broadband services, with disbursements beginning in April 2013 and anticipated to continue through 2016 as carriers complete their deployments.

Earlier this year, the Commission adopted a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) to seek comments on proposals to target funds to support mobile services in a Mobility Fund Phase II. In the FNPRM, we reaffirm our commitment to preserving and advancing mobile voice and broadband services in high-cost areas. In light of marketplace developments in the years since we originally adopted the Mobility Fund regime, we seek comment on how to target funding to areas in which service only exists today due to support from the Universal Service Fund. We also seek to extend service to areas that would not otherwise be covered by commercial 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) deployments. Our goal is consistent with yours: how best to use the limited funds available to us to ensure that rural Americans can take advantage of the opportunities presented by a "mobile society."

Page 2—The Honorable Roger Wicker

I look forward to working with you as we continue reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Wheeler', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Tom Wheeler